The Horse-Tamer's Daughter

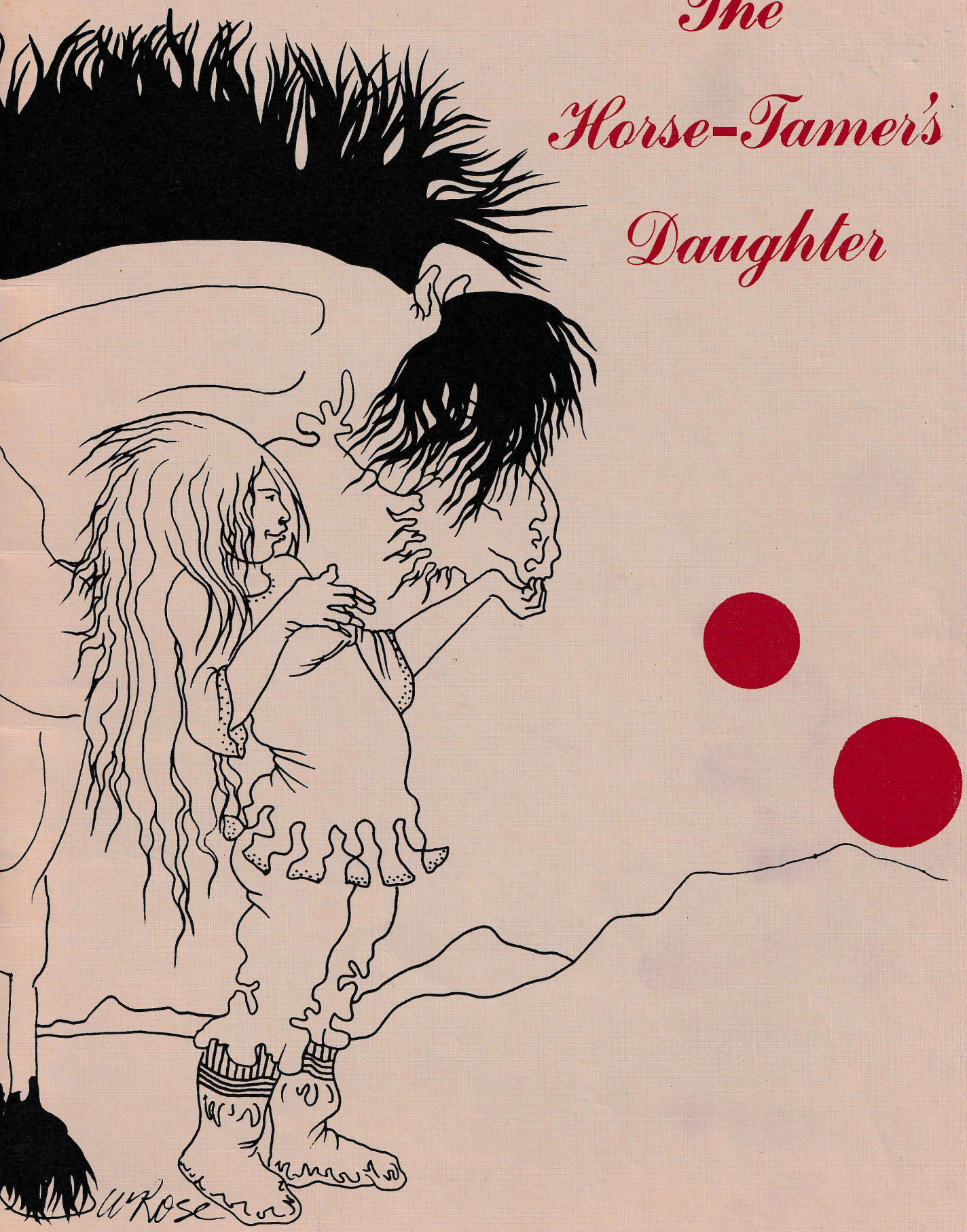
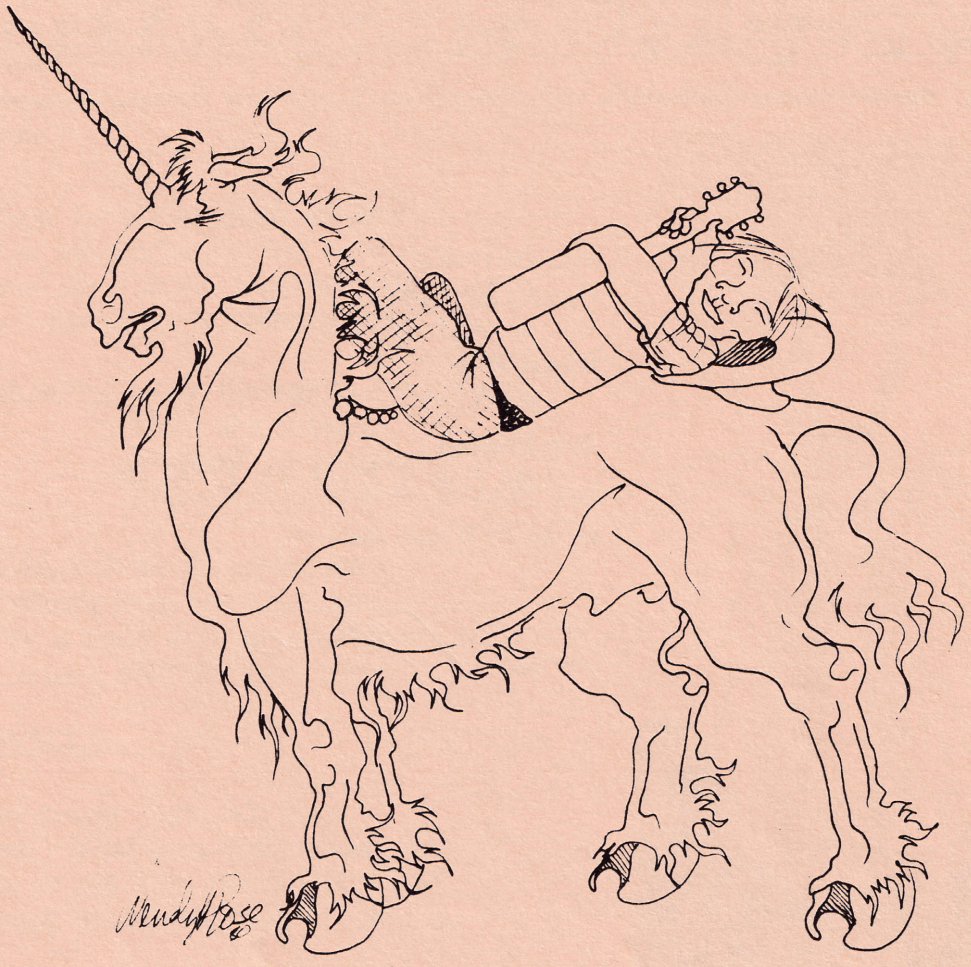


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The Horse-Tamer's Daughter

Edited By Teri Lee



Off Centaur Publications

El Cerrito, CA 1984

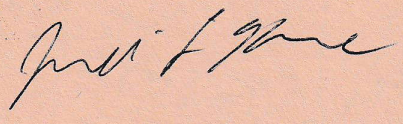
Catherine (Cook) Macdonald

The Horse Tamer's Daughter

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Cover by Wendy Rose



Walk Through the Night Side

Lyrics and Music: Leslie Fish



CHORUS

Empty streets of beads of light.
None spell safety in my sight.
Lend me a knife, lend me a life,
So I can make it home tonight.

CHORUS: Walk through the night side,
Stalk like a beast.
Walk like a caveman.
Starved rock-bottom changes least.

Stalking down the silent stone:
Distance, keep me safe alone,
With a ready grip on a scrap-iron strip —
Sure as a club of bison bone.

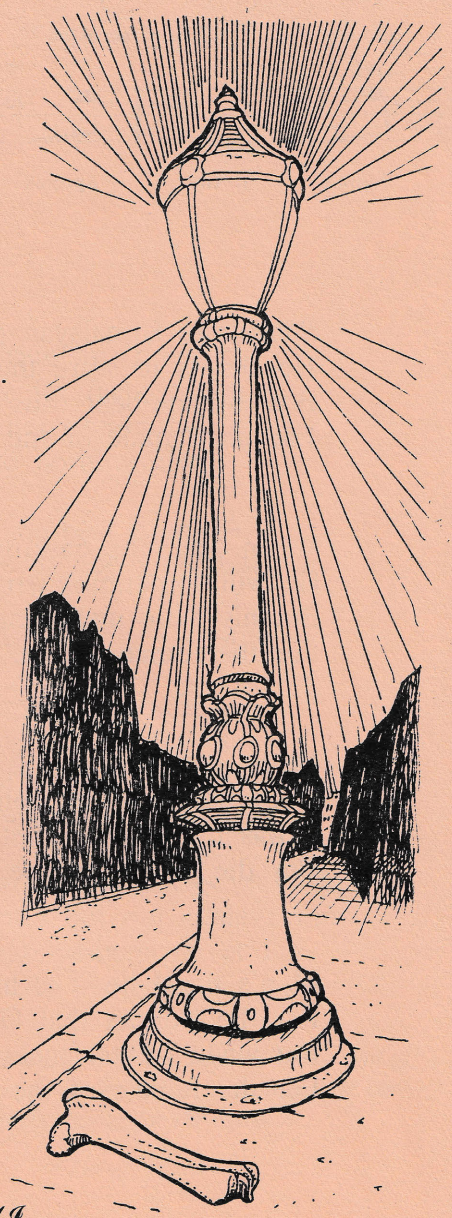
CHORUS

City-jungle: yes, it's true.
That's what cops and robbers do.
Try to get free, that's how to be
Strong enough to walk it through.

CHORUS

Come on junkie, rapist, crook:
Stop and take another look.
I'm still alive, mean to survive.
It's all down in Darwin's book.

CHORUS



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The Female of the Species

Lyrics: Rudyard Kipling
Music: Leslie Fish



When the Himalayan peasant meets the he-bear in his stride,
He shouts to scare the monster, who will often turn aside,
But the she-bear thus accosted rends the peasant tooth and nail,
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

When Nag, the basking cobra, hears the careless foot of man
He will sometimes wriggle sideways and avoid it if he can,
But his mate makes no such motion where she camps beside the trail,
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

When the early Jesuit fathers preached to Hurons and Choctaws,
They prayed to be delivered from the vengeance of the squaws.
'Twas the women, not the warriors, turned those stark enthusiasts pale,
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

Man's timid heart is bursting with the things he must not say,
For the woman that God gave him isn't his to give away;
But when hunter meets with husband each confirms the other's tale,
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

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She who faces death by torture for each life within her breast
May not deal in doubt or pity, must not swerve for fact or jest.
These are purely male diversions; not in these her honor dwells.
She, the Other Law we live by, is that Law and nothing else.

Unprovoked and awful charges — even so the she-bear fights.
Speech that drips, corrodes and poisons — even so the cobra bites.
Scientific vivisection of one nerve until it's raw
And the victim writhes in anguish — like the Jesuit with the squaw.

So it comes that man, the coward, when he gathers to confer
With his fellow braves in council, dare not leave a place for her
Where, at war with life and conscience, he uplifts his erring hands
To some god of abstract justice — which no woman understands.

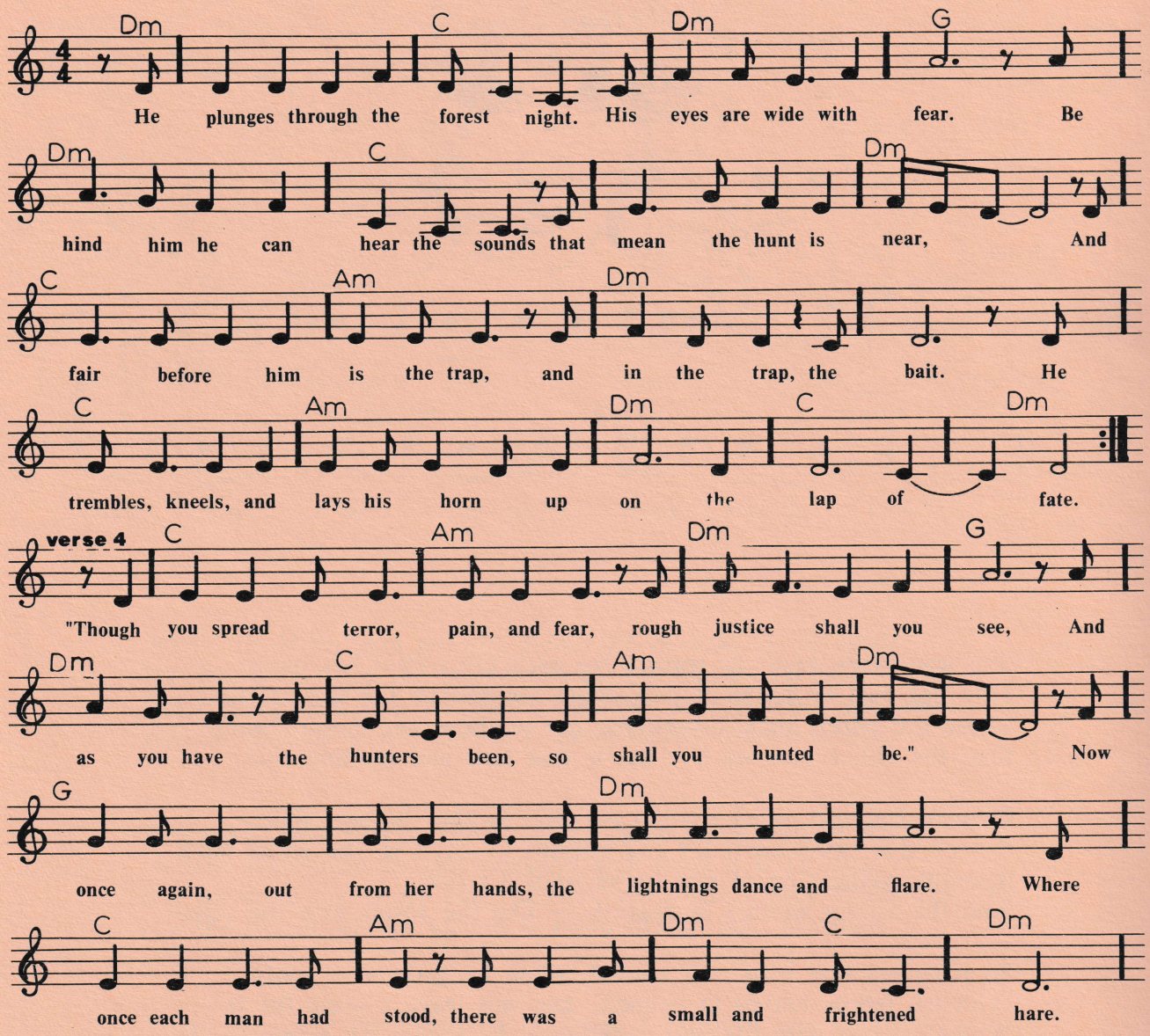
And man knows it, knows moreover that the woman that God gave him
Must command but may not govern, shall enthrall but not enslave him.
And she knows, because she warns him, and her instincts never fail,
That the female of her species is more deadly than the male.

(Note: The editors wish to point out that Rudyard Kipling wrote Female of the Species *at tne end of the last century. Many words and descriptions which were common usage at that time would be considered unacceptably derogatory in a modern work. Some things do change for the better.)*

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The Bait

Lyrics: Mercedes Lackey
Music: Julia Ecklar



He plunges through the forest night. His eyes are wide with fear.
Behind him he can hear the sounds that mean the hunt is near,
And fair before him is the trap, and in the trap, the bait.
He trembles, kneels, and lays his horn upon the lap of fate.

And now the hunt converges on the spellbound unicorn.
The hunters mean to slay the beast, and take his precious horn.
So gleeful in their greed and lust, they have not paused to see
This maid is not the peasant girl they left tied to the tree.

The Horse-Tamer's Daughter © *1984 Off Centaur Publications BMI*



Now as they raise their spears, she casts red lightning from her hands.
Their limbs are bound fast to their sides, as if with iron bands.
She rises; in her voice is rage, and hatred in her eyes.
"Cruel killers of a dream, full well you merit death," she cries.

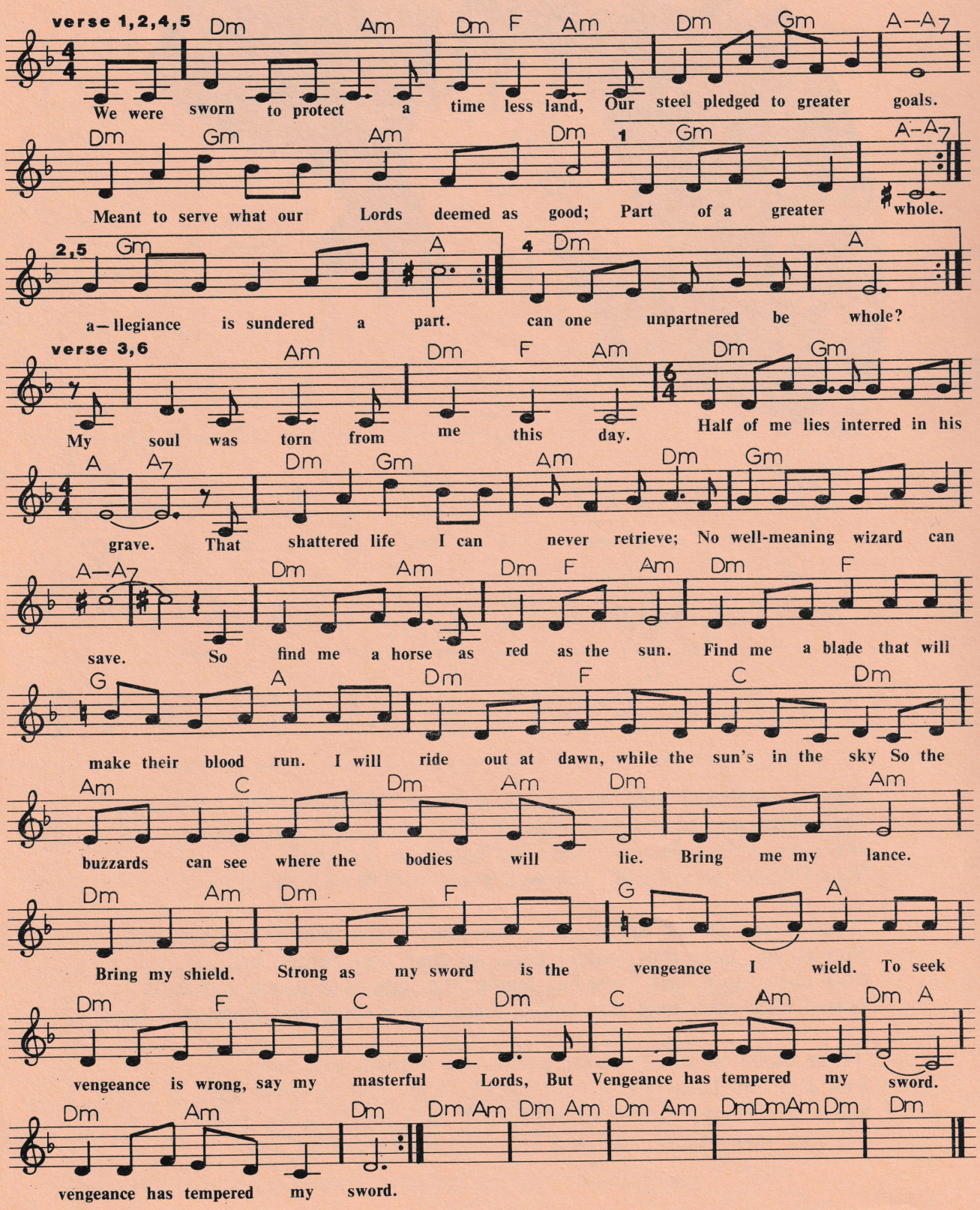
"Though you spread terror, pain, and fear, rough justice shall you see,
And as you have the hunters been, so shall you hunted be."
Now once again, out from her hands, the lightnings dance and flare.
Where once each man had stood, there was a small and frightened hare.

"From moon to sun to moon again, run hunted, evil men,
And pray the Lady spares your lives." They fled in terror then.
She said, "There's others of your kind, they too may die unless. . .
Shall we turn hunter, you and I?" The unicorn said, "Yes."

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The Temper of Revenge

Lyrics and Music: Julia Ecklar



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We were sworn to protect a timeless land,
Our steel pledged to greater goals.
Meant to serve what our Lords deemed as good;
Part of a greater whole.

We swore Lords a pledge with breath and tongue,
A pledge I now break with my heart.
Those beliefs impede what I'm called now to do.
My allegiance is sundered apart.

My soul was torn from me this day.
Half of me lies interred in his grave.
That shattered life I can never retrieve;
No well-meaning wizard can save.

CHORUS: So find me a horse as red as the sun.
Find me a blade that will make their blood run.
I will ride out at dawn, while the sun's in the sky
So the buzzards can see where the bodies will lie.

Bring me my lance. Bring my shield.
Strong as my sword is the vengeance I wield.
To seek vengeance is wrong, say my masterful Lords,
But vengeance has tempered my sword.
Vengeance has tempered my sword.

My companion was made to be half of me;
We were sealed in both body and soul.
What is life to one human alone?
How can one unpartnered be whole?

He was slaughtered at night, not a warrior's death.
All goodness seemed useless and vile,
For Good let my fragile world be destroyed.
My oaths by such lies were defiled.

Forgive me, my Lords, for what I do.
Know that this sinner is suffering too —
But your virtues pure don't allow what I plan,
And by God, I'll pay killers their due!

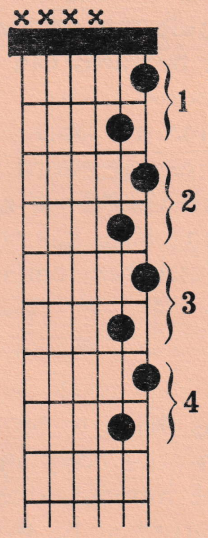
CHORUS

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A Rose for Emily

Lyrics and Music: Julia Ecklar





You are my love, come to me.
Let me hold you through the night.
You promised things so sweet to me;
I'll cling forever to your light.

I heard you swear you'd never leave,
And that in love we'd never die.
So drink of love, so bittersweet;
In our dark dreams we'll never cry.

You are my rose. Bloom for me.
A rose for Emily. . .
A rose for Emily.



I touch your hand, your hair beneath my lips.
My love, I keep you always near.
I never dreamed that love could be like this,
So cold and still, but always here.

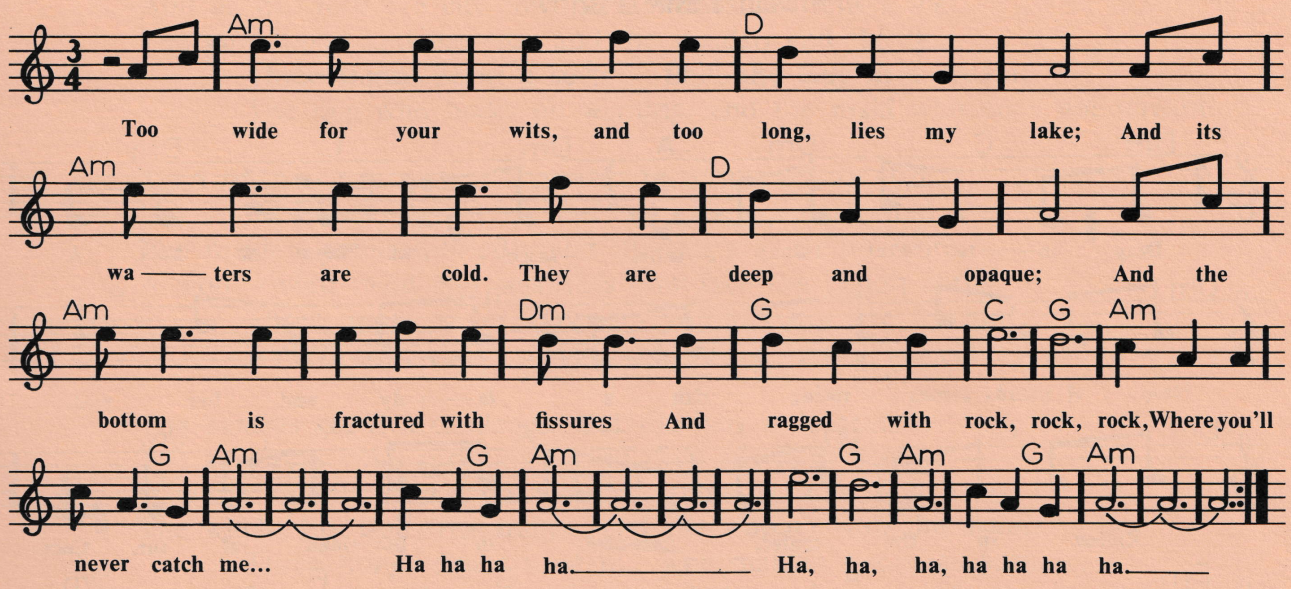
You'll never run away again, my love.
I've kept you carefully to my side.
Your skin, once soft, though brittle now to touch,
Is still as sweet as when you died.

You are my rose. Bloom for me.
A rose for Emily. . . rose for Emily. . .
A rose for Emily.

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Laughter from the Loch

Lyrics and Music: Don Simpson

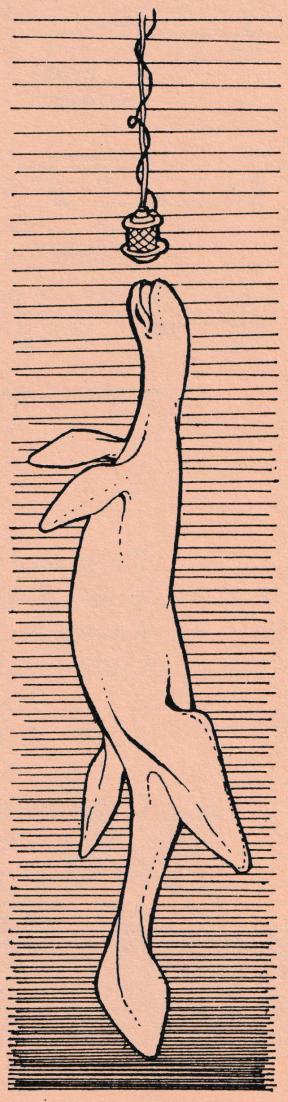


Too wide for your wits, and too long, lies my lake;
And its waters are cold. They are deep and opaque;
And the bottom is fractured with fissures
And ragged with rock, rock, rock,
Where you'll never catch me. . .
Ha ha ha ha. Ha, ha, ha, ha ha ha ha.

So if you should spy me, 'twill be by mistake,
But mostly you'll glimpse just the ghost of my wake,
Or the flash of a fin that means naught,
But serves only to mock, mock, mock,
That you'll never catch me. . .
Ha ha ha ha. Ha, ha, ha, ha ha ha ha.

So don't pester poor fools with those pictures you take,
For they'll say I'm a log, or a bird, or a snake.
So get yourself gone now, go tie up
Your boat at the dock, dock, dock,
For you'll never catch me. . .
Ha ha ha ha. Ha, ha, ha, ha ha ha ha.

Tell yourself I'm a tale, or some fool's flimsy fake.
I'm a myth born of mists; I'm the monster you make
Out of sounds in the night, when you sit
'Round the fire and talk, talk, talk.
Talk will never catch me. . .
Ha ha ha ha. Ha, ha, ha, ha ha ha ha.



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Threes

Lyrics: Mercedes Lackey
Music: Leslie Fish



Deep into the stony hills, miles from keep or hold,
A troop of guards comes riding with a lady and her gold,
Riding in the center, shrouded in her cloak of fur,
Companioned by a maiden and a toothless, aged cur.
Three things see no end: a flower blighted ere it bloomed,
A message that was wasted, and a journey that was doomed.

One among the guardsmen has a shifting, restless eye,
And as they ride, he scans the hills that rise against the sky.
He wears a sword and bracelet worth more than he can afford,
And hidden in his baggage is a heavy, secret hoard.
Of three things be wary: of the hungry hunting cat,
The shepherd eating mutton, and the guardsman that is fat.

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From ambush, bandits screaming charge the pack train and its prize.
All but four within the train are taken by surprise,
And all but four are cut down as a woodsman fells a log:
The guardsman and the lady and the maiden and the dog.
Three things know a secret: first, the lady in a dream,
The dog who barks no warning, and the maid who does not scream.

Then off the lady pulls her cloak. In armor she is clad.
Her sword is out and ready, and her eyes are fierce and glad.
The maiden gestures briefly, and the dog's a cur no more.
A wolf, sword maid and sorceress now face the bandit corps.
Three things never anger, or you will not live for long:
A wolf with cubs, a man with power, and a woman's sense of wrong.

The bandits growl a challenge, but the lady only grins.
The sorceress bows mockingly, and then the fight begins.
When it ends there are but four left standing from that horde:
The witch, the wolf, the traitor, and the woman with the sword.
Three things never trust in: The maiden sworn as pure,
The vows a king has given, and the ambush that is 'sure'.

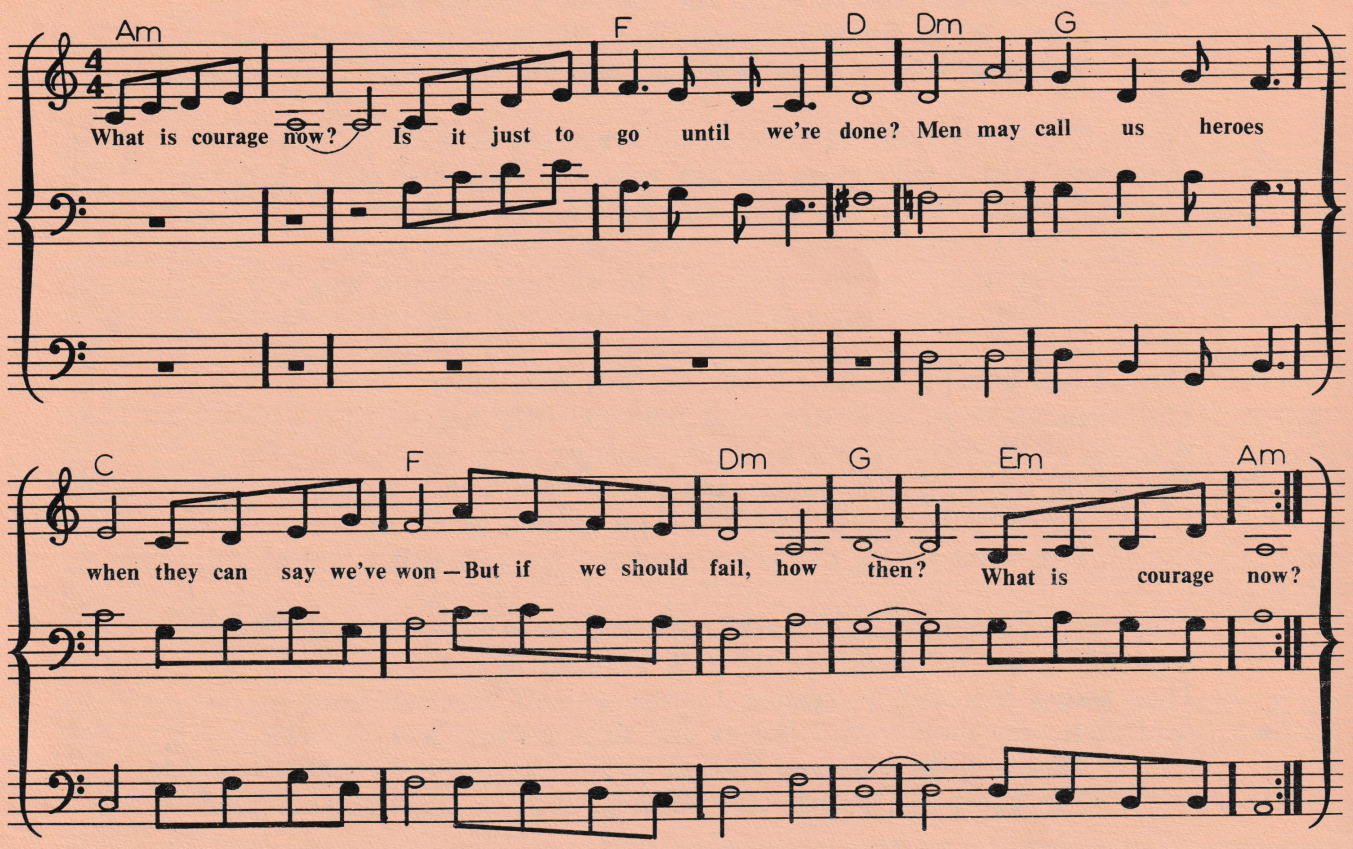
They've stripped the traitor naked, and they've whipped him on his way
Into the barren hillsides, like the folk he used to slay.
They take a thorough vengeance for the women he's cut down,
And then they mount their horses and they journey back to town.
Three things trust and cherish well: The horse on which you ride,
The beast that guards and watches, and the sister at your side.

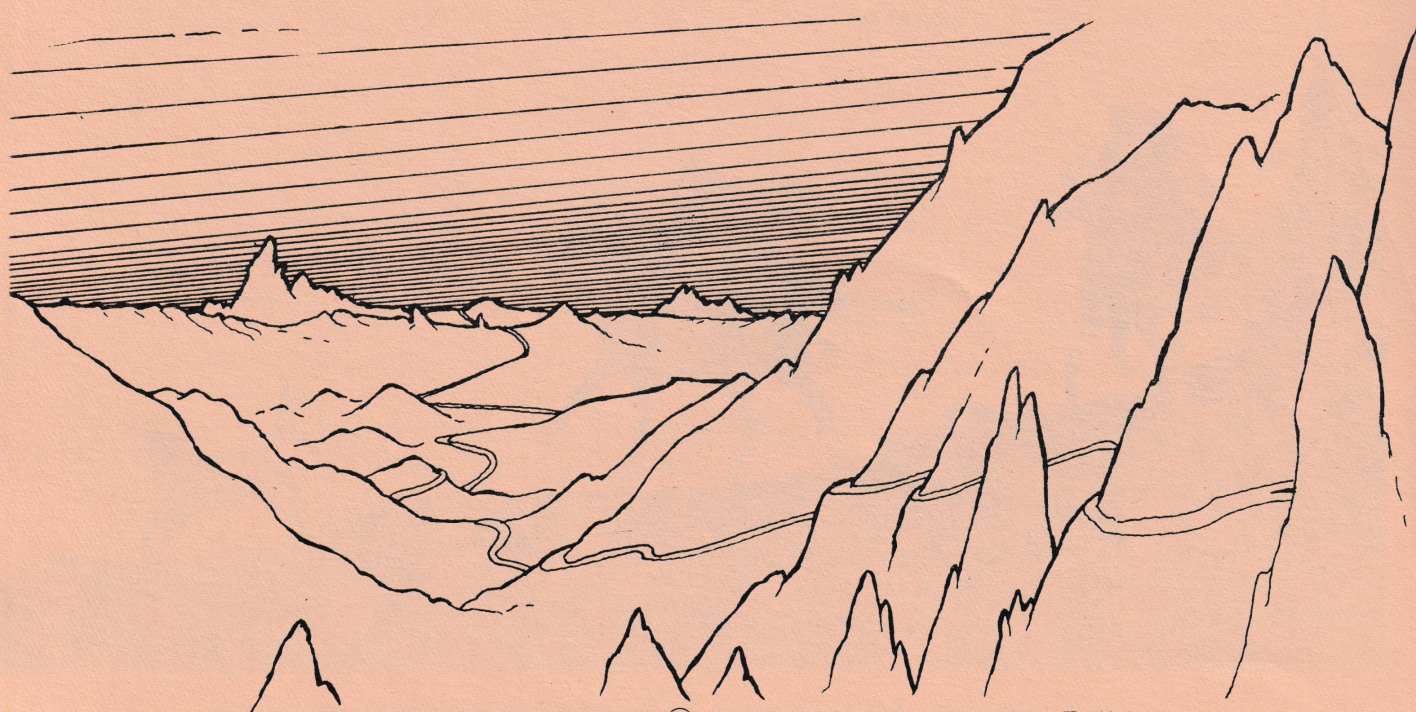


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Fellowship Going South

Lyrics and Music: Leslie Fish
Arrangement: Catherine Cook





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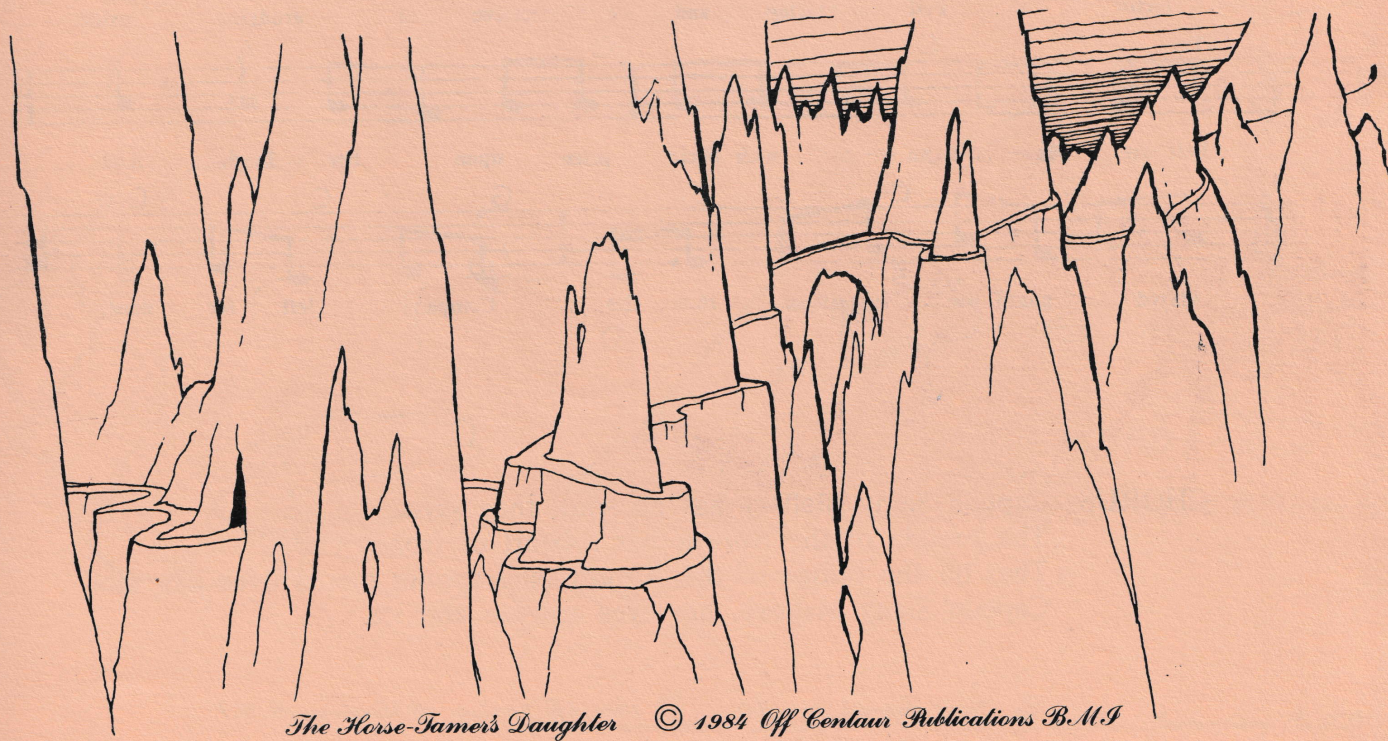
What is courage now?
Is it just to go until we're done?
Men may call us heroes when they can say we've won —
But if we should fail, how then?
What is courage now?

Mountains to our side,
Standing like a wall against the sky,
Show no path to let us through, yet still we search and try.
Silver snow and stone, cold blue
Mountains to our side.

River from the pines,
We can hear your echo far away.
To your banks our step must lead. Help us on our way,
We who know you lend your speed.
River from the pines.

Star above the world,
Seeing down the ways that we must go.
Throw down light to guide a friend, or how else can we know
If there's hope where pathways end?
Star above the world.

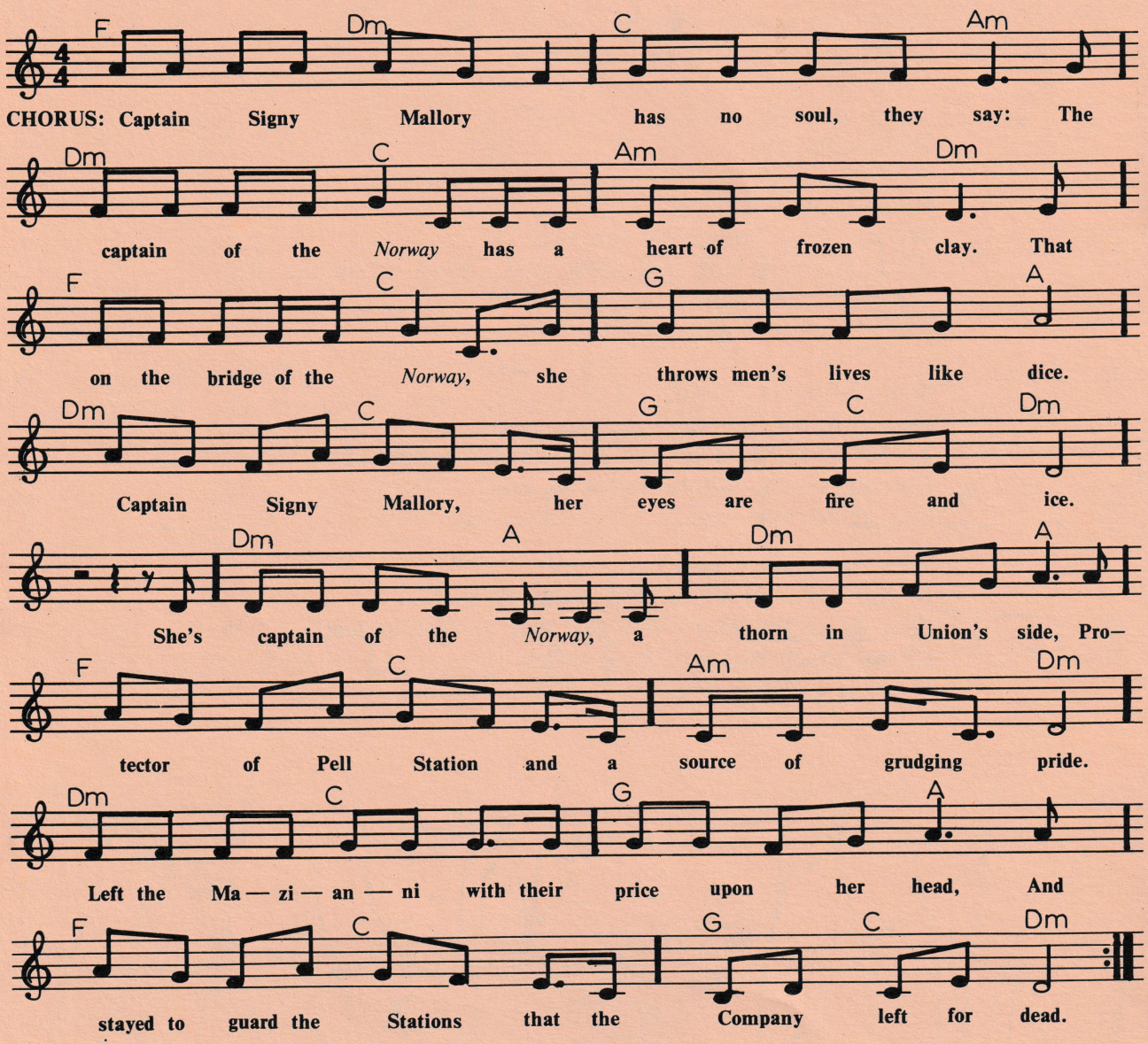
What is courage now?
In the hope we know that holds us fast,
Bear us to the final door and win us free at last
Or we touch this world no more.
What is courage now?



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Signy Mallory

Lyrics: Mercedes Lackey
Music: Leslie Fish



CHORUS: Captain Signy Mallory has no soul, they say:
The captain of the *Norway* has a heart of frozen clay.
That on the bridge of the *Norway*, she throws men's lives like dice.
Captain Signy Mallory, her eyes are fire and ice.

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She's captain of the *Norway*, a thorn in Union's side,
Protector of Pell Station and a source of grudging pride.
Left the Mazianni with their price upon her head,
And stayed to guard the Stations that the Company left for dead.

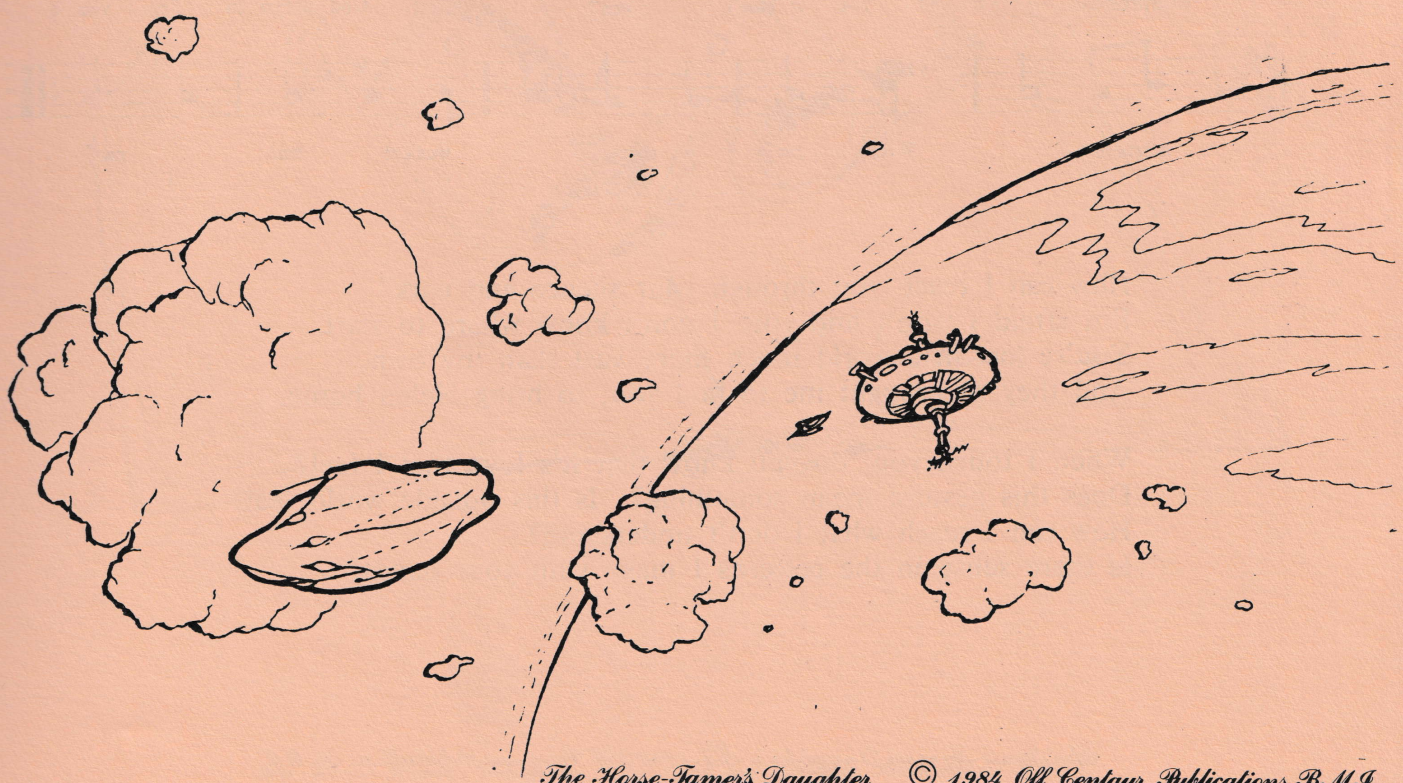
They say she doesn't think about the lives that she has lost.
They say when *Norway* goes to fight, she doesn't count the cost;
That once she's planned a course she never reckons wrong or right —
So why does she stare sleeplessly into the dark all night?

They say for *Norway's* captain, discipline's an iron whip;
It's worth your life to break her rules, in dock or on the ship;
That no one sane serves under her command, but if that's so,
Then why do her troops cheer her when she passes them below?

They say the captain has no crude emotions to control,
Just iron fist, and iron will, and iron banded soul.
They say she shows no mercy, and they say she never can —
So why is *Norway* refuge for a burned-out Union man?

She's captain of the *Norway*, a thorn in Union's side.
The Mazianni fear her. She's the heart of *Norway's* pride.
And Stationer or Merchanter, from Fargone back to Pell,
Know for Mallory all *Norway* would fight demons out of Hell.

CHORUS



The Miracle Worker

Lyrics and Music: Julia Ecklar



How can I reach you through your silence and dark?
I'm afraid I won't find you; I don't know where to start.
You're lost in a world much more vast than my own,
And they've brought me to find you, to bring Helen home.

When I touch you, do you know that it's love that I feel?
Does this gesture mean something? Is this outside world real?
How can I reach what I don't understand?
Is there sense in the patterns I make with your hands?

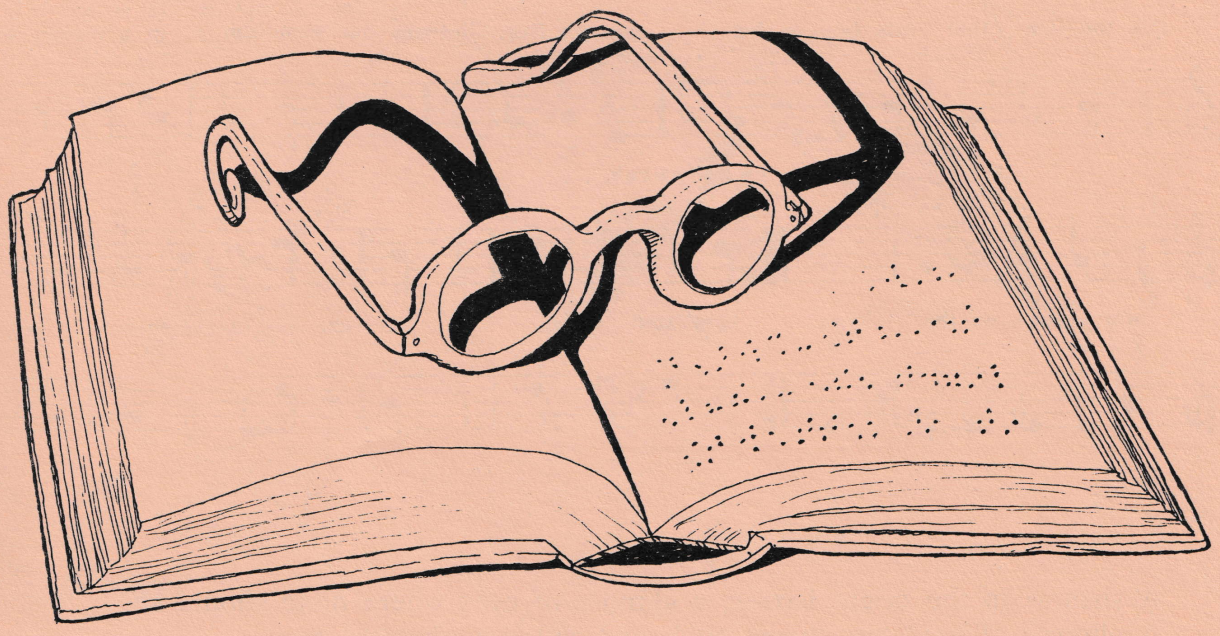
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CHORUS: Am I trying to do the impossible?
Can you comprehend what you can't see?
Will God deign to grant you a miracle
With no miracle worker but me?

What is it like, so completely alone?
Do you know that our world's not so dark as your own?
Does your spirit cry out with the need to be free?
Or is it hiding in silence, waiting for me?

Oh, how can I reach you? Tell me what I should say.
Let me draw your mind outward, don't push me away.
I'm afraid of the dark, but let me inside.
We'll let language fill silence. From darkness we'll fly.

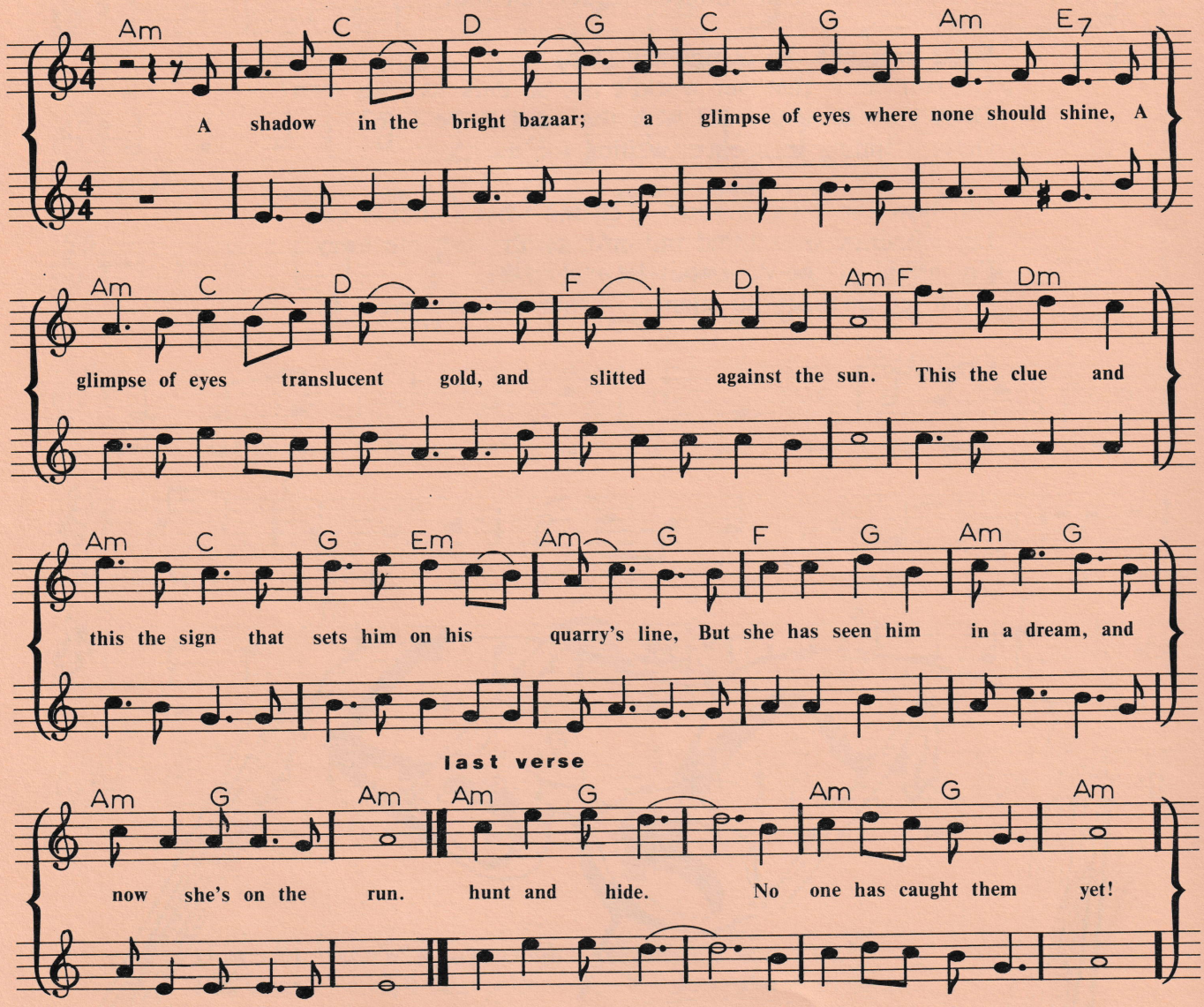
CHORUS



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Golden Eyes

Lyrics: Mercedes Lackey
Music: Leslie Fish
Arrangement: Joey Shoji



A shadow in the bright bazaar; a glimpse of eyes where none should shine,
A glimpse of eyes translucent gold, and slitted against the sun.
This the clue and this the sign that sets him on his quarry's line,
But she has seen him in a dream, and now she's on the run.

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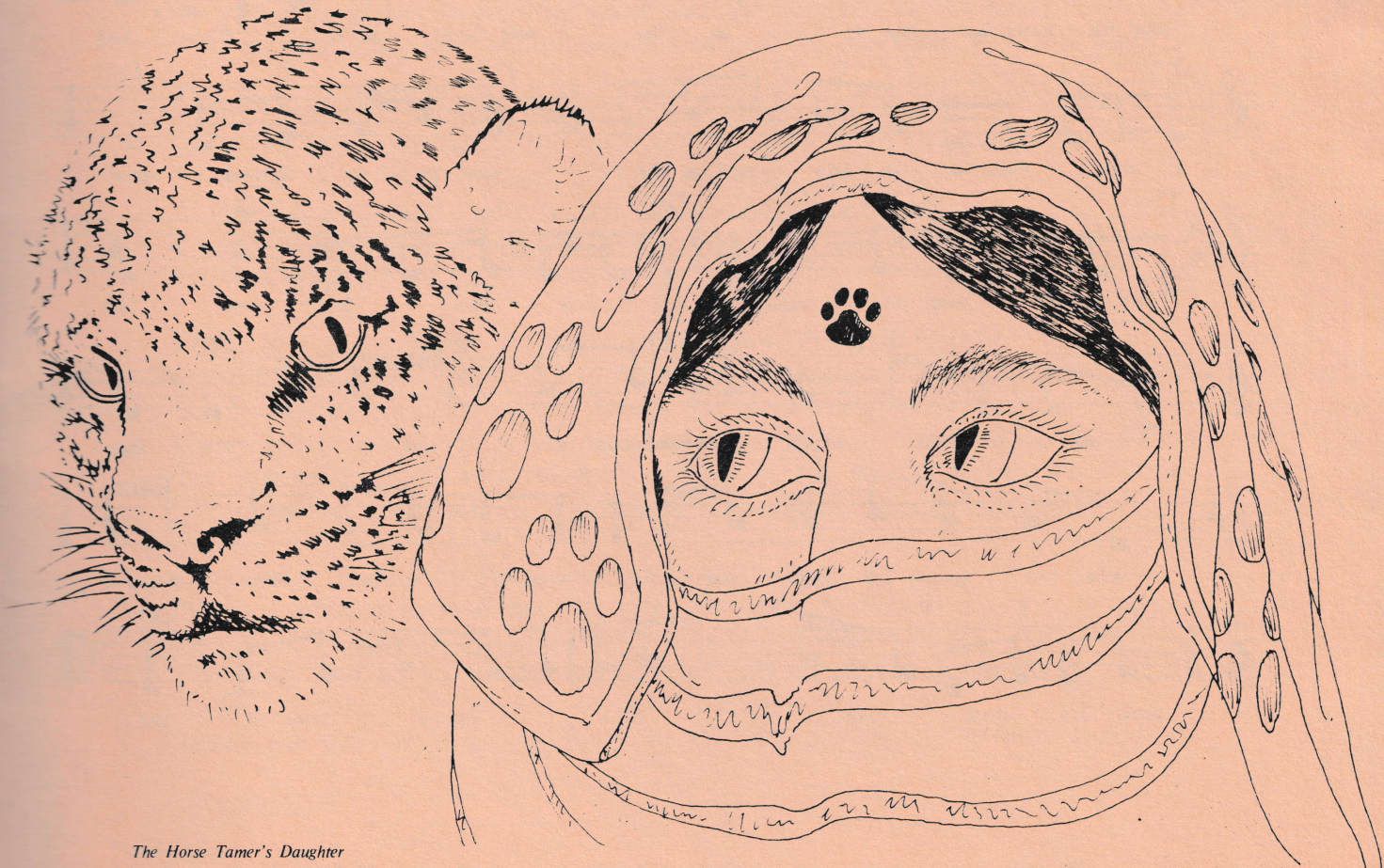
Faster than a thought she flees, and seeks the jungle's sheltering trees,
But he is steady on the track, and half a breath behind.
She tastes his scent upon the breeze, and, looking past her shoulder, sees
He treads upon her shadow. She fears the hunter's mind.

So now she summons all her wit, and every trick she knows to hide,
To make him lose the twisting track, to throw him off her trail.
In woman form, in leopard hide, fording, leaping side to side,
She doubles back along her track — and sees her efforts fail.

He stands before her, dark and grim. Her terror now she can't suppress.
He blocks the only pathway out, and will not let her by.
Her gold flanks heaving in distress, half woman and half leopardess —
To either side, nowhere to hide; it's time to fight or die.

But what is this? To her amaze, the man has thrown his gun away,
And quietly, he draws near her now, a smile upon his face.
Before she thinks to run or stay, his body blurs like softened clay. . .
Before her eyes, to her surprise — a leopard in his place.

The hunter they have sought in vain, and now the talk of the bazaar
Is of the canny leopard pair, a sight none will forget
Who once has seen them near or far, in sunlight or where shadows are,
As side by side they hunt and hide. No one has caught them yet!

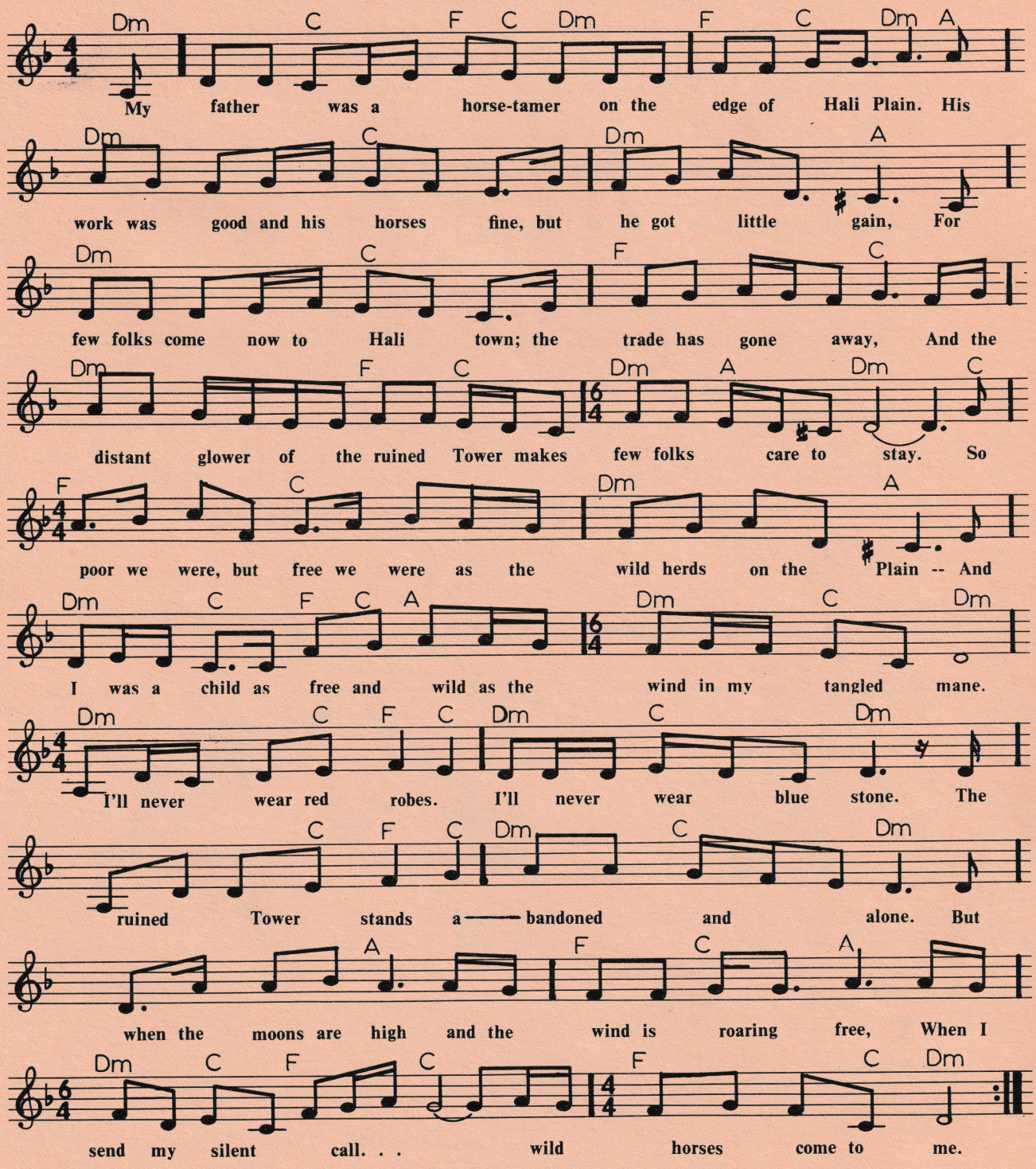


The Horse Tamer's Daughter

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The Horse Tamer's Daughter

Lyrics and music: Leslie Fish



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My father was a horse-tamer on the edge of Hali Plain.
His work was good and his horses fine, but he got little gain,
For few come now into Hali Town; the trade has gone away,
And the distant glower of the ruined Tower makes few folks care to stay.
So poor we were, but free we were as the wild herds on the Plain —
And I was a child as free and wild as the wind in my tangled mane.

CHORUS: I'll never wear red robes. I'll never wear blue stone.
The ruined Tower stands abandoned and alone.
But when the moons are high and the wind is roaring free,
When I send my silent call. . . wild horses come to me.

My Grand-dam told me cradle-tales of the great days long ago,
When the wizards ruled and the land was taxed and the lords would come and go.
"But the land was torn by wars," she said, "And the Tower was broken down,
So the lords appear no longer here to rule over Hali Town —
And neither do the wizards take our children, one in ten —
So grateful be that we're poor but free, and you are not living then."

My father had no sons at all, nor could he pay the fee
Of hireling men to help his work, so he turned to Mother and me.
We helped him ride the Wild Ones down, to catch and tame and train.
We lived thus free and merrily on the edge of Hali Plain.
So well I loved the whispering grass and the children of the land,
That in time I learned, as the seasons turned, to call them into my hand.

When I rode out on Hali Plain, I would set my mind to fly
'Til I felt the grass below my feet, and the birds high in the sky.
I felt the Wild Ones running, and I'd bid them turn again.
A few I'd see would come to me; about one in every ten.
I never called them into the rope; their trust I'd not betray,
But willing and free they'd carry me on the Plain to run and play.

There is a lake beyond the town. The Tower is on its shore.
Close by the Holy Castle stands, where none may pass the door.
But I always chose that ruined Tower for my favorite place to play.
I would daydream long of my grand-dam's songs and the tales of the ancient days.
The Stones breathed wondrous tales to me of the powers within the ground,
'Til amid the stones of the Tower's bones a Magic Mirror I found.

The Mirror in its iron frame was dark as a winter sky.
Never a sight it showed me, 'til I set my mind to fly.
Aye, then it showed me marvellous things, a window on the world:
The Plain, the town, all the lands around, as far as the ocean curled.
I wore it tied about my neck to keep it always near:
Beside the land and my wild-horse band, the treasure I held most dear.

CHORUS

As we rode down to Hali Town one summer market day,
We saw the folk in turmoil run, and heard an old man say,
"Go back, go back, you Horse-tamer! The Wizards have come again!
They come, I fear, for the children here. They are taking one in ten.
Go back, go back, you Horse-tamer! Your daughter hide away.
Conceal your child where the land is wild, 'til the Wizards are gone away."

Back I rode to Hali Plain, as fast as a horse could run.
I hid myself in the ruined Tower, away from wind and sun.
I looked within the Mirror's deeps to see what might befall,
And close at hand saw the Wizards' band, all fierce and fair and tall.
Then one of them raised up his eyes, and said, "Who can this be?"
He turned his head, with its hair so red, and looked straightway at me.

"What is this power I feel," said he, "So clear and raw and strong?
Rise up and ride, my sisters all; we have been searching wrong.
More strength is here than we thought to find. The gods so jest with men;
It may be, still, that without our will, that Tower may wake again.
'Twas an ill-trained Keeper's mind I met, but I've rarely felt such power.
We dare not wait, lest we come too late. Make haste to Hali Tower!"

As soon as I thus heard their plan, I turned my mind away
And set it flying over the plain. To the Wild Ones I did say,
"Oh, come to me, my free friends all! Oh, come to my right hand!
We must prevent these lords' intent of the claiming of our land.
If they should rule this land once more, we shall all be servant-men —
And you, oh my dears, shall be captives here, and never run free again!"

I bound my mind to the Wild Ones' minds and called as I never did call,
'Til seven mares and a stallion bold came into the ancient hall.
Just seven mares and a stallion bold, the Magic Mirror and me,
To stay the command of the Wizards' band, and keep the Plains-folk free.
So I bound my soul to the Wild Ones' souls as I never did before,
To bind our might in a ring of light, and fight in a Wizards' war.

We built a shield about the Tower, with walls of wind and thought.
With hooves of light, through the Mirror's sight, we battered and thrust and fought.
The Wizards flinched, the Wizards fell, and cried up from the ground,
"Have done, have done, you nine-in-one! Only tell us, what have we found?
How did your Star-stone hold intact, which should have burned away?
What kind of men can stand up again through the fires we threw today?"

"I have no Stone at all," I said, "But a Mirror like the sea.
You fought with never a man this day, but eight wild horses and me.
I am the Horse-tamer's daughter — and defender of the land —
And I know my kind were never inclined to live at a lord's command.
So it is my wish ye go away, and leave us as we've been.
Leave us free as we choose to be; we would never be ruled again."

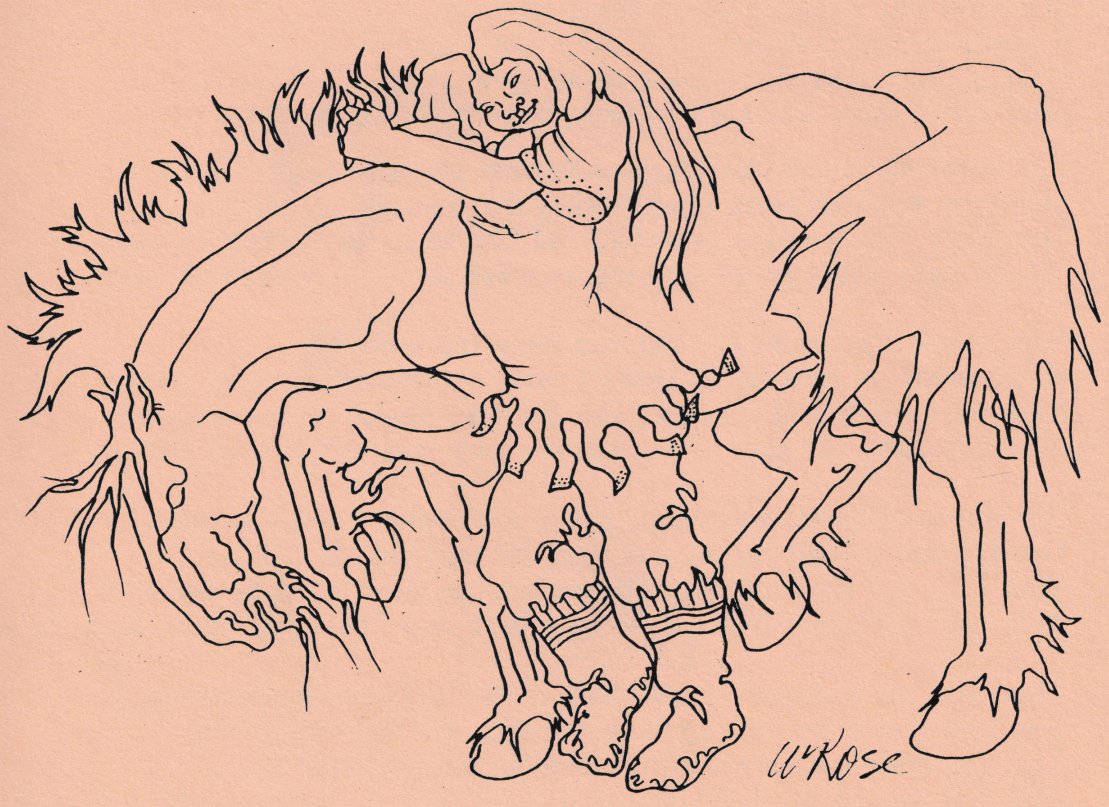
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Up then spoke the Wizard-lord: "It shall be as you have said.
Better to make an Eighth Domain than duel 'til all are dead.
With a Circle made of wild beasts and a plain first-level screen,
You've all the power of any good Tower — and more than many I've seen.
You are the Living Matrix then; that's all that you can be.
Tis plain your breed is of Wizard's seed. Oh Child, keep away from me!"

So Hali Tower is tenanted now. Fresh straw lies on the floor.
Tall wild horses come and go, free through the open door.
The Hali-folk bring corn and cloth and wood for the winter's chill.
The tales they tell are spreading well, and I fear they always will.
I'm just the Horse-tamer s daughter,but they love me for my power.
They've made of me what I feared to be: the Keeper of Hali Tower!

FINAL CHORUS:

I'll never wear red robes. I'll never wear blue stone.
The ancient Tower stands no longer quite alone.
Now when the moons are high and the wind is roaring free,
When I send my silent call. . . wild horses come to me.



The Oath

Lyrics and Music: Arlin Robins



As I was out a-riding, one evening last July,
I heard a maiden singing, and bitter she did cry.
I quietly dismounted, to get a closer view
And see if there was aught a man of honor could pursue.

She stood all in the clearing, and no one else was there.
Her eyes with salt tears shone within the shadows of her hair.
Her dance was wrought in anger, and her voice was tight with pain
As she sang her song of undying love for some far wandering man.

"Oh, you deny the magic, and you deny the love,
But I swear an oath by all that's bright in the darkening sky above
That we have shared a magic, and the love flowed strong and true.
You can stop your ears to my heart's song, and still it sings for you.

"So you want to be my friend, and use a friendly voice to me.
Oh, I swear an oath by all that lives on land, in air and sea,
That I do not leave the friendship when my heart's led by romance.
You can close your eyes on the swirl and sway, but you cannot stop the dance.

"And you say you fear to hurt me, or to cause me some new pain.
I swear an oath by mist and fog, by sleet and snow and rain,
That the finest treasure's worthless if its beauty is not seen,
And you pierced my heart like cold, hard steel by denying what had been.

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"Well, I pity all your ladies, for your memory so short,
And your eyes that speak of romance, when you're only wanting sport.
Oh, I swear an oath by all I hold in this world to be true,
That as deep a grief as I feel now, 'tis a greater loss for you."

She swore that final oath, and then she danced it to the ground.
The birds and beasts, the mists and rain, all heard that final sound.
And I'm the only witness as can tell the tale to you
Of the sorrows learned by those who find that love can be half true.

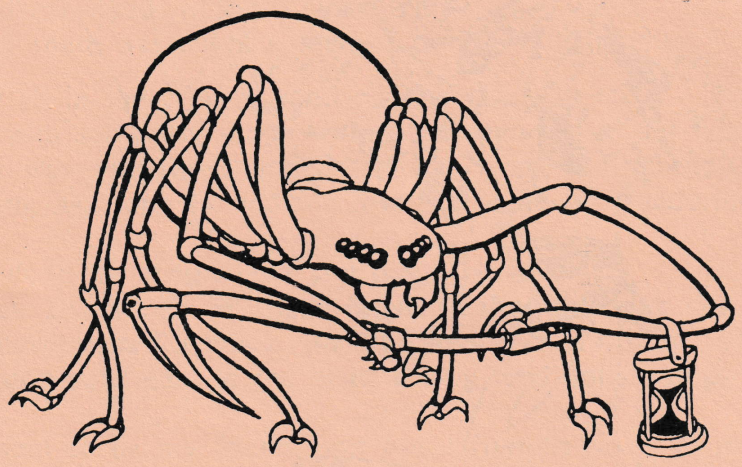


Black Widows in the Privy

Lyrics and Music: Heather Jones



Everyone knows someone we'd be better off without,
But best not mention names, for we don't know who's about.
But why commit a murder, and risk the fires of hell
When black widows in the privy can do it just as well?



Now poison's good, and daggers, and arrows in the back,
And if you're really desperate, you can try a front attack,
But are they really worthy of the risk of being caught
When black widows in the privy need not be bribed or bought?

So if there's one of whom you wish most simply to be rid,
Just wait 'til dark, then point the way to where the widow's hid,
And say to them, "I think you'll find that this one is the best,"
And black widows in the privy will gladly do the rest.

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Source notes

The Female of the Species

A fairly pragmatic view of the female by Rudyard Kipling.

The Bait

The tale of what happens when a unicorn hunt is brought to an unexpected conclusion.

The Temper of Revenge

This is from an unpublished short story by Julia Ecklar.

A Walk Through the Night Side

A Fish-eye view of the streets of any city, any night.

A Rose for Emily

Based on the short story by William Faulkner, this lady was not going to let her beau "love her and leave her."

Laughter From the Loch

What Nessie thinks of us. . .

Threes

Based on and incorporated into the short story "Turnabout" and the novel The Oathbound *by Mercedes Lackey.*

Fellowship Going South

Leslie Fish's Tolkien ballad; from the Lord of the Rings *trilogy.*

Black Widows in the Privy

Or, how to get rid of a blot on the universe. . .

Signy Mallory

Based on one of the main characters of Downbelow Station *by C.J. Cherryh.*

Miracle Worker

About Anne Sullivan, Helen Keller's beloved "Teacher."

Golden Eyes

Another hunt comes to an unexpected conclusion in a song by Mercedes Lackey that later became the story "Werehunter" in Tales of Witchworld.

The Oath

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. . ."

The Horse-Tamer's Daughter

A most unusual Darkover song about a most unusual matrix circle and a very *strange Keeper. . .*

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